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The Linnaean description as compared with modern day descriptions is rather incomplete; in so far as it goes, however, it is characteristic of the plant that has generally been known as *Panicum glabrum* Gaud. Likewise, by the process of eliminating all related species which it can not possibly be, we gradually come to the same species, *Panicum glabrum* Gaud. The last sentence of the Linnaean description referring to the exterior glume spreading and adhering to the rachis is not always apparent but I have seen just such a condition in some specimens of *Digitaria humifusa* collected in Michigan. This species is not usually accredited to the "Indies" in botanical manuals but Hooker l. c., 17, gives it for the Himalaya Mts. and as far south as Simla, and the Index Kewensis to North Temperate and Tropical regions. Perhaps Linnaeus was misinformed as to its distribution and as happened in other cases with him, gave accordingly a wrong habitat. The more important synonyms are given below.

Digitaria linearis (Linn.) Pers. Syn. 1, 85, 1805; Crep. Man. ed. 2, 335, 1866. *Panicum linearis* Linn. Sp. Pl. Ed. 2, Vol. 1, 85, 1762; Burm. Fl. Ind. 25 pl. 10 fig. 2 (3), 1768; Krock. Fl. Siles. 1, 95, 1787. *Syntherisma linearis* (Linn.) Nash, Bull. Torr. Bot. Club, XXII, 420. 1895. *Panicum Ischaemum* Schreb. ex Schweigg. Spec. Fl. Erlang, I, 16, 1804. *Digitaria humifusa* Pers., l. c. *Paspalum ambiguum* Lam. and D. C., Fl. Fr. III, 16, 1805. *Syntherisma glabrum* Schrad. Fl. Germ. 163, t. 3. fig. 7, 1806.

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Our Sparrows.

BY BROTHER ALPHONSUS, C. S. C.

In this article I have not made an exhaustive study of each species, but have given their more striking characteristics as these were learned through observation. As the Song Sparrow is the commonest of all our sparrows, as well as the most gifted as a songster, I have written a fuller account of this species. Four sparrows—Henslow's, Lark, Swamp, and Savanna—are either rare

or very rare; and so I have not attempted to write even a brief biography of these species. The most that could be said of them would be to set down the few records which I have made of these sparrows, and that I have already done in previous articles.

SONG SPARROW.

Melospiza fasciata.

Observations of this species will show many differences in different years. I shall not attempt here to note all the various records I have made of the species for many years but have selected the months from October 1912 to April 1913 for special study.

The song season of this sparrow gradually draws to a close at the end of August; but after a month of silence, about the 1st of October, when there are often fine days, some loud notes of the species may be heard for a few days. And later in the month, even as late as the 20th, a few feeble notes will occasionally be heard. After that date only call-notes are uttered, and during November the Song Sparrow may not be recorded frequently. In December 1912, I made two records of the species—on December 5, and 14. Previous to the first date, the bird had not been seen since November 25; and after the second date, there were no more records during the winter months.

Very often the Song Sparrow will begin to sing a little, late in February, but in 1913 the first subdued notes were heard on the 11th of March. The next day three were heard, one singing louder than the others. On March 13, I heard the fine notes of a Song Sparrow in the same place and in the same manner as an individual of the species had sung last year. All this would seem to indicate that the same bird had returned again to the same locality. The Song Sparrow is a great lover of water, and his matchless strain will be heard oftenest near lakes and streams.

The Song Sparrow is the favorite song bird of many bird lovers. This is probably so both because of its long song season and the quality of its notes. Strong, clear, varied, melodious—these are characteristics of the Song Sparrow's singing. An absence of the plaintive element that is so evident in such species as the Field and Vesper Sparrows, makes the Song Sparrow a blithe and cheery songster. The abundance of this species gives the student of bird music an excellent opportunity to appreciate its powers of song. As the birds usually sing in the vicinity of their nests, it is easy to

become acquainted with a number of Song Sparrows within a limited area. And one of the most striking things about these sparrows is the superiority of some as singers over others of the same species. Another characteristic of this sparrow is its confiding disposition. Often an observer may approach very near a singing Song Sparrow without disturbing it in the least. Frequently I have passed beneath them in low trees, and not intimidated them.

This confidence in man that is so remarkable a trait of the Song Sparrow is also shown by the place it may select as the site for its nest. Usually placed on the ground, but sometimes in a very small tree or in large flower stalks, the nest is not seldom near a path or in a garden where people pass frequently. And the nest may be examined without undue anxiety on the part of the old birds, which will do no more than utter their characteristic call-note nearby. I am inclined to believe that this sparrow may have three broods, for I found a nest which was occupied by the young birds until August 23, 1918. There were three fledglings in the nest. On the morning of the 24th, as I approached the vicinity of the nest, I heard the call-notes of the young birds and the old, and I at once concluded that the nest must be vacant. On examination I found that it was empty. The nest was well constructed of twigs as the outer part, which was lined within by grasses. A heavy rain the day before did nothing more than wash out the nest.

VESPER SPARROW.

Pooecetes gramineus.

The Vesper Sparrow's date of migration in spring is about the same as that of the Chipping Sparrow—late in March or early in April. And it also resembles the latter species in not being abundant until the end of April. The sweet, continuous strain of the Vesper Sparrow has often been noted by writers on bird life; yet as compared with the matchless melody of the Song Sparrow the performance is inferior. Perhaps the plaintive quality of the song is its most pleasing feature; sweetness, too, it has to a marked degree. This bird is an inhabitant of the outlying fields and the pastures, where from fence post or tree near the roadside its strains are wafted on the breezes. In the evening several Vesper Sparrows may be heard singing in different parts of a farm, and the effect of the song at such a time is suggestive of the peacefulness of

country life. The bird nests on the ground, but conceals the location so well that few observers ever find the site. This sparrow has the habit of running ahead of a person who may approach it; and when finally flashed, it always shows in flight the outer white tail feathers. In flying, it goes swift and low, with a slightly undulating movement.

FIELD SPARROW.

Spizella pusilla

The Field Sparrow is an early arrival in spring, coming some years in the last week in March. It begins to sing on the first day of its appearance, or rather one will likely hear the bird before seeing it. The Field Sparrow inhabits both fields and woods, where its plaintive notes may be heard almost continuously. There is less variety in the Field Sparrow's song than in the Vesper's or Song Sparrow's, but the quality of the notes is hardly less inferior to that of those famous songsters. The call-note of this species resembles that of the Tree Sparrow. So much alike are these two sparrows that beginners will for some time find it difficult to distinguish between them. The Field Sparrow departs for the south about the same time as the Tree Sparrow arrives here from the north. Autumn records of the Field Sparrow are rare after October 15. The nest of this bird is placed on the ground, and can be discovered by watching the old birds carry food to their young. When the fledglings have left the nest, families of Field Sparrows may be frequently found. I have noted partial albinos in this species more than in any other.

CHIPPING SPARROW

Spizella socialis.

The Chipping Sparrow usually arrives in the early part of April, but I have found as many as ten days difference between dates of arrival. At first the species is not abundant, being seen mostly in pairs or singly. Rarely a small flock of Chipping Sparrows may be seen in spring. The note of this sparrow may be heard as soon as the bird comes. In quality the song is the least pleasing of all the sparrows. But what it lacks in musical powers it more than makes up for by its charming disposition. Perhaps there is no other bird that is so sociable as the Chipping Sparrow. This

fearlessness makes it easy to study the species. The nest is usually placed low in bushes or small evergreens, where the eggs or young may be observed without annoying the old birds. For some unaccountable reason many abandoned nests of this species may be discovered. In some places the Chipping Sparrow is rarely found, and it surprised me to be told by a friend who is an excellent observer that this bird is hardly ever seen in what is known as the Chicago Area.

TREE SPARROW.

Spizella monticola.

The Tree Sparrow arrives here from the north usually in the latter part of October, and remains until early in April. However, there are long periods, especially when the snow is deep, in which no Tree Sparrows appear. One winter, after December 5, the species was absent 47 days. In winter these sparrows are never abundant; small flocks or only several are usually found. In late autumn, and especially in early spring, the Tree Sparrow is most common. About March 20, the first notes of their beautiful song may be heard; it resembles somewhat that of the Goldfinch, but is stronger and sweeter. When a number sing together in some hedge-row, the effect is very fine. The song season of the Tree Sparrow is brief—about three weeks. Some springs when the weather is very inclement these birds rarely sing. I remember one spring which was so cold that I did not hear the song once.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.

Zonotrichia albicollis.

This beautiful sparrow first appears in our latitude about the third week in April, and tarries with us until early in May. In autumn it returns the first week in October, and stays until the end of the month. The White-throats are partial to the ground, where they feed among the dead leaves. Here an observer may obtain a good view of their markings, which are so harmoniously blended that he can not fail to be pleased with them. Both in spring and autumn, the species is probably the most abundant of all sparrows. It has a trustful disposition, and will invade city parks in great numbers. There is a peculiar, plaintive quality in the notes of the White-throated Sparrow, and little variety, so that the song is not notably fine.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW.

Zonotrichia leucophrys.

This handsome sparrow is thought by some bird lovers to be as beautiful as the White-Throated Sparrow. The erect posture the White-Crowned Sparrow takes when perched in some low tree or in a hedge gives an observer an excellent opportunity to admire the striking appearance of the bird. Its arrival in spring occurs in the early part of May, and in autumn about the middle of October.

Some years I have failed to make any records in autumn, and even in spring this species is never common. I have known one good observer who never made a record of the White-crowned Sparrow in this locality (northern Indiana). The song of this sparrow is seldom heard; and while somewhat similar in quality to that of the White-throated Sparrow, I think it is fuller and stronger.

FOX SPARROW.

Passerella iliaca.

This is the largest of our sparrows. It arrives early in April, and remains two or three weeks before finally disappearing. Autumn records of the species are usually rare. I have found the Fox Sparrow quite locally distributed; and when its habitat is found, the birds may be seen frequently during their stay with us. The song may not be heard at all during some springs; but usually a regular observer will some cool morning be cheered by the strong, musical notes of the Fox Sparrow.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW.

Ammodramus savannarum passerinus.

This small and somewhat elusive sparrow is an inhabitant of clover or alfalfa fields. Here it becomes quite abundant, but strange to say is usually over-looked even by keen observers. I daresay that rarely will any but the most painstaking persons find this species without the help of some one who knows the bird well. Its appearance is not remarkable, and a clear view of its markings will be necessary to be sure of its identification. I have never found the Grasshopper Sparrow before May, but I believe it must arrive in April. The note of this sparrow is another difficulty to the beginner, for hardly will the uninitiated take the feeble utterance of the Grasshopper Sparrow for the song of a bird.